

# Kidney Health

Tips for People with Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)

**W**hat you eat and drink can help slow down chronic kidney disease. Some foods are better for your kidneys than others. Cooking and preparing your food from scratch can help you eat healthier.

These tips will help you eat right as you manage your CKD. The First Steps to Eating Right (pages 1 and 2) are important for all people with CKD. The Next Steps to Eating Right (page 3) may become important as your kidneys slow down.

Work with your dietitian to choose the right foods for you.

## THE FIRST STEPS TO EATING RIGHT

### STEP 1

**Choose and prepare foods with less salt and sodium.**

*Why?* To help keep your blood pressure below 130/80. Your diet should contain less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium each day.



### STEP 2

**Eat the right amount and the right types of protein.**

*Why?* To help protect your kidneys.



### STEP 3

**Choose foods that are healthy for your heart.**

*Why?* To help keep fat from building up in your blood vessels, heart, and kidneys.



## THE FIRST STEPS TO EATING RIGHT

### STEP 1 Choose and prepare foods with less salt and sodium.

- Buy fresh food more often. Sodium (a part of salt) is added to many packaged foods.
- Use spices, herbs, and sodium-free seasonings in place of salt.
- Check the Nutrition Facts label on food packages for sodium. A Daily Value of 20% or more means the food is high in sodium.
- Try lower-sodium versions of frozen dinners and other convenience foods.
- Rinse canned vegetables, beans, meats, and fish with water before eating.

#### Look for Food Labels that Say

- Sodium free • Salt free • Very low sodium • Low sodium • Reduced or less sodium
- Light in sodium • No salt added • Unsalted • Lightly salted

### STEP 2 Eat the right amount and right types of protein.

- Eat small portions of protein foods.
- Protein is found in foods from plants and animals. Talk to your dietitian about how to choose the right combination for you.

#### Animal-protein Foods

- Chicken • Fish • Meat • Eggs • Dairy

#### Plant-protein Foods

- Beans • Nuts • Grains

### STEP 3 Choose foods that are healthy for your heart.

- Grill, broil, bake, roast, or stir-fry foods, instead of deep frying.
- Cook with nonstick cooking spray or a small amount of olive oil instead of butter.
- Trim fat from meat and remove skin from poultry before eating.

#### Heart-healthy Foods

- Lean cuts of meat, like loin or round • Poultry without the skin • Fish • Beans
- Vegetables • Fruits • Low-fat milk, yogurt, cheese

## THE NEXT STEPS TO EATING RIGHT

As your kidneys slow down, you *may* need to eat foods that are lower in phosphorus and potassium. Your health care provider will use lab tests to watch your levels.

### STEP 4 Choose foods with less phosphorus.

**Why?** To help protect your bones and blood vessels.

- Many packaged foods have added phosphorus. Look for phosphorus—or for words with “PHOS”—on ingredient labels.
- Deli meats and some fresh meat and poultry can have added phosphorus. Ask the butcher to help you pick fresh meats without added phosphorus.

Foods <i>Lower</i> in Phosphorus	Foods <i>Higher</i> in Phosphorus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fresh fruits and vegetables</li><li>• Breads, pasta, rice</li><li>• Rice milk (not enriched)</li><li>• Corn and rice cereals</li><li>• Light-colored sodas/pop</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meat, poultry, fish</li><li>• Bran cereals and oatmeal</li><li>• Dairy foods</li><li>• Beans, lentils, nuts</li><li>• Colas</li></ul>

### STEP 5 Choose foods that have the right amount of potassium.

**Why?** To help your nerves and muscles work the right way.

- Salt substitutes can be very high in potassium. Read the ingredient label. Check with your provider about using salt substitutes.
- Drain canned fruits and vegetables before eating.

Foods <i>Lower</i> in Potassium	Foods <i>Higher</i> in Potassium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apples, peaches</li><li>• Carrots, green beans</li><li>• White bread and pasta</li><li>• White rice</li><li>• Rice milk (not enriched)</li><li>• Cooked rice and wheat cereals, grits</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oranges, bananas</li><li>• Potatoes, tomatoes</li><li>• Brown and wild rice</li><li>• Bran cereals</li><li>• Dairy foods</li><li>• Whole wheat bread and pasta</li><li>• Beans and nuts</li></ul>

For more information, visit [www.nkdep.nih.gov](http://www.nkdep.nih.gov) or call 1-866-4 KIDNEY (1-866-454-3639).

The National Kidney Disease Education Program (NKDEP) encourages people to get tested for kidney disease and educates those with kidney disease and their providers about treatments that can help delay or prevent kidney failure. NKDEP is a program of the National Institutes of Health.



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